

2142, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to reimburse veterans receiving emergency treatment in non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities for such treatment until such veterans are transferred to Department facilities, and for other purposes.

S. 2314

At the request of Mr. SALAZAR, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2314, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make geothermal heat pump systems eligible for the energy credit and the residential energy efficient property credit, and for other purposes.

S. 2606

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2606, a bill to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, and for other purposes.

S. 2712

At the request of Mr. DEMINT, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2712, a bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to complete at least 700 miles of reinforced fencing along the Southwest border by December 31, 2010, and for other purposes.

S. 2716

At the request of Mr. DOMENICI, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) were added as cosponsors of S. 2716, a bill to authorize the National Guard to provide support for the border control activities of the United States Customs and Border Protection of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

S. 2718

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2718, a bill to withhold 10 percent of the Federal funding apportioned for highway construction and maintenance from States that issue driver's licenses to individuals without verifying the legal status of such individuals.

S. 2720

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2720, a bill to withhold Federal financial assistance from each country that denies or unreasonably delays the acceptance of nationals of such country who have been ordered removed from the United States and to prohibit the issuance of visas to nationals of such country.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BIDEN (for himself, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. SUNUNU):

S. 2731. A bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to provide assistance to foreign countries to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, today I am pleased to join Senators LUGAR, KENNEDY, and SUNUNU in introducing legislation to reauthorize our Government's effort to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria overseas. Entitled the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008—in recognition of the great service to this issue by our recently departed friends from the House of Representatives—the bill would continue and expand the revolutionary public health program begun 5 years ago at the initiative of President Bush.

In his State of the Union address in 2003, the President announced a dramatic proposal—to spend \$15 billion over 5 years to combat HIV/AIDS globally, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, which has been hardest hit by the pandemic. Congress responded promptly, authorizing the full amount requested by the President just a few months later.

In the last 5 years, the work of the U.S. Government and its implementing partners around the world has been nothing short of miraculous. Well over a million people have been saved from almost certain death by the provision of anti-retroviral drugs. Mr. President, 150,000 babies have been born without HIV because of efforts to prevent the transmission of the disease from mothers who were so infected. Millions of people suffering from AIDS have received treatment and care. Over two million orphans and vulnerable children have received care, education and support. Across Africa, in communities large and small, we have given millions of people hope for a better and longer life.

Even the most optimistic among us would not have predicted these dramatic results. History will record that this was President Bush's finest hour—he challenged our Government, and the governments in Africa, to respond to one of the most profound crises of our time. They have met and exceeded that challenge. While implementation of the program has not been problem-free, it has proceeded at a pace and scale that was unimaginable to most of us. The credit for this success goes to thousands of dedicated people serving here and abroad, and to the American people, for their generosity in supporting this program.

We cannot, however, rest on this success. We have made progress, but the disease is still winning. Thousands of

new infections occur every day. For every person enrolled in a treatment program last year, six more became infected.

Last spring, the President challenged us again—to reauthorize the program at a level of \$30 billion over the next 5 years. In the course of last summer and fall, the Committee on Foreign Relations has closely reviewed the President's request and the operation of our current programs. To review the programs in the field, teams of committee staff traveled to most of the 15 “focus” countries that have received the bulk of the funding. They visited dozens of clinics, hospitals, and care centers. They talked to hundreds of government officials, community members and health staff working against the disease, people living with HIV/AIDS, and children orphaned by the disease. We have learned what is working—and more important, what is not working. Last fall, the committee held formal hearings to take testimony from experts from within and without the Government. The committee has also closely reviewed numerous studies performed by government agencies and nongovernmental organizations working in this field.

The Congress is now ready to act, and we are ready to respond to the President's call. The bill that we introduce today will reauthorize the Global HIV/AIDS programs for the next 5 fiscal years. It will provide authorization of appropriations of \$50 billion over this period, of which \$9 billion is devoted to fighting malaria and tuberculosis, two diseases that are also major causes of death in the developing world. This higher figure is justified because the President's figure of \$30 billion is too low—it will barely keep pace with inflation, as we are already funding current programs at a rate above \$6 billion a year. Additionally, the President's request dealt only with HIV/AIDS, although the initial legislation in 2003 covered all three deadly diseases.

The bill that we introduce will keep the basic framework of the program intact, but makes important adjustments based on lessons learned over the past 5 years. First, the bill removes most earmarks in the original law that delineated the percentages that should be devoted to treatment, to care, and to prevention. A major, congressionally mandated study by the Institute of Medicine, as well as one by the Government Accountability Office, concluded that these earmarks unduly limit flexibility for the people implementing the programs. We need to lift these restrictions in order to let our Government and local officials tailor their responses to local conditions. The only earmark that is retained is a 10 percent allocation for orphans and vulnerable children, for which there appears to be universal support.

The bill also seeks to coordinate our HIV/AIDS programs with other health and development programs. The disease does not exist in a vacuum. Across the